(b) if so, how the services of the driver have been appreciated by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) Yes, Sir. Train No. 629 Villupuram-Mayiladuturai Passenger left Nellikuppam station at 06.18 hrs. of 25.06.2001. While approaching Varakkalpattu, the train driver, on seeing big stones between the track, stopped the train. The stones were removed by the crew and the train was restarted. The train suffered a detention of five minutes at the site.

(b) The driver of the train has been recommended for an award at Zonal Headquarters level.

Introduction of trains in Kerala

2869. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria/norms for laying rail lines and introducing trains in States;

(b) whether Kerala needs expansion and introduction of trains; and

(c) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) Investment planning on the Railways including planning for New Lines, is done in an integrated and need based manner keeping a national perspective in view. Geographical boundaries of a State, *per se,* do not form a criterion for determining Railway investments, especially in a scenario where many Railway projects span across more than one state.

Similarly, decisions regarding introduction of new trains are taken in a need based manner keeping in view the traffic requirement, operational feasibility and availability of resources.

New rail line between Kudus and Chikmagalur

2870. SHRI K. C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) when laying of the new rail line between Kadur and Chikmagalur was sanctioned;

(b) if so, the estimated cost of the project;